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Implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report provides an overview of progress on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, in response to General Assembly resolution 63/216. While good progress has been made in implementing some aspects of the Hyogo Framework for Action, such as improvements in institutional capacities and in disaster preparedness, acceleration in implementation is required towards all goals of the Framework. New information contained in the recently launched *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction* indicates that growing exposure to risk is outstripping current abilities to reduce vulnerability.

There is an urgent need to invest more in systematic implementation and to address the driving factors: rural poverty and vulnerability, unplanned urban growth and declining ecosystems. The second session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, held in June 2009, called for action to integrate disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation efforts and to strengthen community-level action. It also discussed a number of specific targets and new initiatives to scale up action and investment for disaster risk reduction.

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I. Trends in disasters and disaster risks

1. Globally, disaster risk is increasing substantially with regard to most hazards, with the risk of economic loss increasing much faster than the risk of mortality. The main driver of this trend is rapidly increasing exposure to risk. As countries develop, and both economic conditions and governance improve, vulnerability decreases, but not rapidly enough to compensate for the increased exposure.

2. During the reporting period, June 2008 to June 2009, 343 disasters linked to natural hazards affected more than 42 million people, taking more than 14,000 lives and causing economic damage totalling $57.4 billion. Asia had the highest occurrence rate (36 per cent), Africa the highest mortality (60 per cent) and the Americas the highest economic losses (88 per cent).[1]

3. Disasters linked to hydrometeorological hazards, such as floods, storms and droughts, caused more than 80 per cent of the damage inflicted by all types of natural hazards. Asia had the highest occurrence rate (37 per cent) and the highest mortality (51 per cent), and the Americas were hardest hit in terms of economic losses (88 per cent).[2] Drought affected 14.5 million people in nine countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Heavy monsoon rains caused severe flooding and affected more than half a million people in India, Nepal and Pakistan. The 2008 Atlantic hurricane season was very active, with 16 tropical storms, 5 of which were high-intensity hurricanes. Cuba was hit by four successive tropical cyclones, which damaged or destroyed 500,000 homes. In Haiti, more than 800,000 people were affected and the estimated losses of $900 million amounted to 15 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP). Hurricane Ike caused economic losses estimated at $30 billion in the United States of America.

4. The first edition of the *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction*, which I launched in Manama on 17 May 2009,[3] provides strong evidence of how disasters are both a cause and a consequence of poverty, and how climate change impact magnifies the disaster risk. The report identifies three main drivers for the risk patterns: deficient urban and local governance, livelihood vulnerability in rural areas and declining ecosystems.

5. The report underscores the fact that disaster risk is increasingly urban. It is projected that by 2010, 73 per cent of the world's urban population and most of its largest cities will be in developing countries. Approximately 1 billion people worldwide live in vulnerable informal settlements around cities, and that number is growing by approximately 25 million per year.

6. Approximately 75 per cent of the people below the international poverty line live in rural areas, including 268 million in sub-Saharan Africa. Rural poverty is associated with unequal land distribution, lack of access to improved seeds, poor use of irrigation technology, lack of economic diversification, weak markets and trade barriers.

7. The global decline in ecosystems and the loss of many services they provide contribute to increasing vulnerability for poor urban and rural communities. For

[1] International Disaster Database, Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters, 2009.

[2] Ibid.

[3] *2009 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction: Risk and Poverty in a Changing Climate*, United Nations, 2009.

example, mangroves cleared to create shrimp ponds increase the risks associated with storm surges, while drained wetlands increase flood risks, and deforestation increases both flood and landslide risks.

8. In addition, climate change is beginning to magnify the uneven nature of the distribution of disaster risk by increasing the hazards and at the same time eroding the basis for resilience, and therefore further skewing disaster impacts towards poor communities in developing countries.

II. Progress made in implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action

A. Action at the national level

9. Systematic reports have been made by 88 countries on their progress in implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action. These are submitted to the HFA Monitor and summarized in the *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction*. A total of 120 Governments have now designated official focal points for the implementation, follow-up and monitoring of progress of the Framework for Action.

10. In general terms, countries are making good progress in strengthening capacities, institutional systems and legislation to address deficiencies in disaster preparedness and response, as well as in other areas, such as the enhancement of early warning systems. As a result, some lower-income countries, such as Bangladesh and Cuba, have already made dramatic strides in reducing mortality risk in tropical cyclones and floods. Despite the fact that Cuba was hit by four successive tropical cyclones in 2008, only seven deaths were reported.

11. By contrast, little progress has been made in mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into social, economic, urban, environmental and infrastructural planning and development. As a result, the risk of global economic losses continues to grow at a faster rate than mortality risk. The rate of increasing exposure to risk is outstripping the current abilities of many Governments to reduce vulnerability.

12. Progress is closely related to national income levels. High-income countries are making greater progress in adopting hazard-resistant building standards and environmental planning regulations, compared with many low-income countries which lack the necessary technical, human, institutional and financial capacities. Many countries, including high-income countries, still lack a holistic policy and strategic framework for addressing disaster risk.

B. Action at the regional level

13. Progress is being made at the regional level, where cooperation mechanisms such as regional platforms, networks and partnerships have been active in catalysing increasing action. Several regional coordination organizations have also developed relevant strategies and partnerships.

14. The Strategy secretariat currently has representation through its regional offices in Africa, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and West Asia, and

North Africa. The focus has been on mobilizing and coordinating support to regional and national disaster risk reduction processes, including through strong regional alliances with intergovernmental organizations, regional policy dialogues, baseline information and implementation tools and close cooperation with United Nations agencies and the World Bank.

C. Action at the international level

15. The Strategy secretariat facilitated and promoted the engagement of numerous partners in disaster risk reduction in a coordinated manner. The United Nations Development Group finalized and disseminated guidelines on disaster risk reduction to United Nations country teams. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) works in 50 high-risk countries on enhancing disaster risk reduction and recovery capacities. The Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery, a partnership between the World Bank and the Strategy, has supported the mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction through its country assistance strategies.

16. Tools, guidance, training and good practice information packages have been developed for national and local governments, communities and city authorities on early warning, risk and vulnerability assessment and education. Several networks of parliamentarians around the world have started advocating for investment in disaster risk reduction as a tool for climate change adaptation.

17. Substantial scaling up of activity and enhanced synergy among environmental, development and humanitarian partners have been taking place. The Strategy secretariat also continued to actively promote disaster risk reduction as an adaptation policy and to build close working relationships on the topic with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. In September 2008, I convened a ministerial-level meeting in New York on reducing disaster risk in a changing climate in order to further advance that agenda.

D. Coordination and guidance through the Strategy system

18. Strategy stakeholders at all levels have a fundamental role in supporting the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action. In order to further strengthen the Strategy system, in particular to ensure its system-wide high-level leadership and coordination role in disaster risk reduction, I have appointed Margareta Wahlström as my Assistant Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction and Special Representative for the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action. Ms. Wahlström assumed her office in January.

19. The second session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction was held in Geneva from 16 to 19 June in a context of growing alarm about global climate change and of increasing disaster risks. Recognition of the role of the Platform was demonstrated by the increase in active participation, with 1,688 participants from 152 Governments and 137 organizations and agencies of the United Nations system, international financial institutions, regional bodies and scientific and academic communities. High-level representatives, including several heads of State or Government, highlighted in stark, unequivocal terms the fact that reducing risk is critical to managing the impacts of disasters, including those

resulting from the effects of climate change, and to avoiding an erosion of social and economic welfare.

20. There has been a significant increase in political will and practical experience with respect to disaster risk reduction since the first session of the Global Platform in 2007. The second session placed a strong emphasis on lessons learned and the development of coordinated and sound guidance to implement systematically disaster risk reduction measures. The Chair's summary highlighted four key areas. [4]

21. There was an overwhelming view that urgent action is required to harmonize and link the frameworks for both disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation in the broader context of poverty reduction and sustainable development, and that disaster risk reduction must be a concrete part of the deal on climate change that I hope will be sealed at the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Copenhagen in December 2009.

22. Reducing disaster risk at the community and local levels and promoting the role of women as drivers of action were seen as being essential and needing systematic support from central or local governments as part of the policy mainstream. Such collaboration and partnerships should reflect the mutual dependence of central and local governments and civil society actors.

23. Recognizing that the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action needed to accelerate rapidly from isolated actions and pilot projects to full implementation, the Global Platform saw the setting of targets in specific areas as being essential. It was proposed, for example, that national assessments of the safety of existing education and health facilities be undertaken by 2011 and that concrete action plans for safer schools and hospitals be developed and implemented in all disaster-prone countries by 2015. Other targets were proposed for national risk assessments, municipal disaster recovery plans, early warning systems, water risks and the enforcement of building codes.

24. The Global Platform identified a drastic mismatch between the resources required to address disaster risk in developing countries and those actually available, and urged the massive scaling up of action and funding from national budgets and international sources. There was significant support to target the equivalent of 10 per cent of humanitarian relief and recovery expenditure, and at least 1 per cent of all national development and development assistance funding, to risk reduction measures. More explicit information on the effectiveness and cost of specific measures and patterns of investment in disaster risk reduction is needed.

25. The Global Platform acknowledged the important role of the Strategy system in supporting Governments and civil society organizations, and considered that the planned midterm review of the Hyogo Framework for Action would require ownership on the part of Governments, the close involvement of civil society, strengthened regional capacities for coordination and support from the Strategy secretariat and its partners. It was also emphasized that the midterm review would benefit from using existing sets of benchmarks and guidelines developed to measure progress on the Hyogo Framework for Action. Many participants expressed interest and readiness to support the midterm review in a practical manner. The Strategy

[4] The Chair's summary and other meeting documents are available at www.unisdr.org.

secretariat is working on a timetable for the midterm review and will keep Member States regularly informed on the next steps of the process.

26. During the reporting period, the Strategy secretariat guided and provided support to national processes for the review of progress on the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action, through a reporting framework, various regional and national training workshops and the "HFA Monitor" system, on the basis of the goals and priorities of the Hyogo Framework and the Strategy guidance publication on generic indicators. The HFA Monitor is accessible online (www.preventionweb.net) for designated national authorities and Framework focal points.

27. By June 2009, 103 countries were in the process of reporting and 88 national reports had been submitted online. The analysis of the information available was included in the *2009 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction* and was made available for the second session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. A regional synthesis report was prepared for the third Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, held in December 2008. The Americas, the Arab region, Europe and Africa conducted similar exercises and presented regional reports to the Global Platform. The collaborative effort on the *Global Assessment Report* by United Nations agencies, the World Bank, Member States, regional intergovernmental and technical institutions, civil society and other Strategy partners clearly demonstrates the benefit of the Strategy's multi-stakeholder system in guiding and supporting the implementation of disaster risk reduction.

28. In parallel, the Global Network of Civil Society Organizations for Disaster Reduction undertook an extensive multi-country and multipartner review of local perspectives on progress in implementing the Hyogo Framework. In its report it concluded that the efforts undertaken in the context of national programmes had so far had little impact on vulnerability at the local level and that a deeper engagement with local communities was essential to overcome that shortcoming.

29. PreventionWeb has developed a substantial repository of accessible information and a virtual hub mechanism for the dissemination of practical information, including standards and guidelines, lessons learned and access to expertise. It has published over 4,500 articles in 12 content collections, and reached over 22,000 unique visitors globally in 2008. Regional Strategy information systems are also being developed in collaboration with the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery and other partners.

30. A directory, *Disaster Risk Reduction in the United Nations 2009*, was produced as the first comprehensive compilation of mandates, programmes and services aligned with the Hyogo Framework priorities of the United Nations organizations and the World Bank. The directory is available on PreventionWeb and will be regularly updated.

E. Investing in disaster risk reduction

31. The General Assembly, in its resolution 63/216, called for the international community to invest systematically in disaster risk reduction with a view to

implementing the objectives of the Strategy and providing adequate contributions to the United Nations Trust Fund for Disaster Reduction.[5]

32. Contributions of approximately $7.6 million were received by the Trust Fund in calendar year 2008 to support joint results of Strategy partners, including the *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction*. The joint work programme and Trust Fund support for it will be reviewed with key Strategy partners in 2009, with a view to improving the collaborative actions of partners and ensuring more strategic coherence with the Hyogo Framework for Action requirements.

33. The resource mobilization efforts of the Strategy secretariat have contributed to increasing levels of voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund. Total income in 2008 amounted to $28.9 million. Although there has been a gradual expansion of the donor base, a small group of core contributors[6] continues to meet the majority of the secretariat's resource requirements — the five largest contributors accounted for 66 per cent of annual income in 2008 (as opposed to 77 per cent in 2007). The number of donors increased from 18 to 22, with notable new contributions from Australia and Spain, and a contribution from Bahrain — the first from the Gulf region.

34. The Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery continues to develop as a key collaborative mechanism for supporting global disaster risk reduction. Total pledges by donors to the World Bank-managed tracks 2 and 3 of the Facility during 2007-2008 exceeded $90 million.

35. UNDP works in more than 50 high-risk countries on disaster risk reduction and recovery. In 2008, disaster risk reduction expenditures climbed to $140 million, of which more than 90 per cent went directly to national programmes.

36. The reporting period saw several positive developments in the creation of an enabling policy environment for international investments in risk reduction. Australia recently launched the policy set out in *Investing in a safer future: a disaster risk reduction policy for the Australian aid programme*. In February 2009, the European Commission adopted as a package two new communications: the "EU strategy for supporting disaster risk reduction in developing countries", which was adopted by European Union development ministers in Brussels in May 2009, and "A community approach on the prevention of natural and man-made disasters".

37. In addition, in April 2009, the European Commission presented a white paper, *Adapting to climate change: towards a European framework for action*, which cites risk reduction as an essential part of successful adaptation. Denmark initiated a review of its strategic priorities in humanitarian assistance, which included a multipartner policy forum, held in Copenhagen in November 2008, on the theme "Linking climate change negotiations and disaster risk reduction".

38. As noted above (see paras. 20-25), the second session of the Global Platform discussed investments in disaster risk reduction and highlighted the usefulness of investment benchmarks, such as allocating a portion of national budgets to disaster

[5] The mechanism, administered by the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, through which funds can be invested in secretariat and Strategy partner actions.

[6] In descending order of contributions: World Bank, European Commission, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Norway, Australia, Spain, Japan, Germany and Denmark.

risk reduction measures or certain percentages of humanitarian funds (10 per cent), development funds (1 per cent) and climate change adaptation funds (30 per cent) to disaster risk reduction work.

39. In my 2008 report (A/63/351), I pointed out the need to ensure a stable and predictable financial basis to enable the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction to perform its key support functions for the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action. The General Assembly, in its resolution 63/216, stressed the importance of disaster risk reduction and subsequent increased responsibilities of the Strategy secretariat, and requested me to explore all means of securing additional funding and to report on this to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. In that connection, I wish to report that internal consultations are under way, and I will report to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session.

III. Conclusions and recommendations

40. While good progress has been made recently on some aspects of disaster risk reduction, it is clear that much more needs to be done to achieve systematic investment in this area. Disasters are holding back progress on the achievement of poverty reduction and other Millennium Development Goals. Greater urgency is required to address the disaster risk drivers: rural poverty and vulnerability, unplanned and poorly managed urban growth and declining ecosystems. Disaster risk reduction offers the potential for a triple win — for adaptation, disaster risk reduction and poverty reduction.

41. Risk-prone countries are giving high priority to disaster risk reduction and are ready to move ahead quickly in the implementation of policies and strategies to address their risks. National and regional platforms need to be strengthened rapidly to coordinate such action, and the international community needs to facilitate better access to the resources, assistance and expertise required. Disaster risk reduction knowledge must be made easily accessible to all, in particular the most vulnerable and poorest communities, to increase their safety and resilience.

42. The implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action needs to accelerate rapidly from isolated actions and pilot projects to full-scale implementation with specific targets and concrete action in countries. Specific targets were proposed at the second session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, such as undertaking national assessments of the safety of existing education and health facilities by 2011. Targets for expenditure need to be considered and set by responsible authorities.

43. International and regional mechanisms for guidance and coordination have been developed quickly and need to be further developed to meet future demands. In particular, the elements of the Strategy system — the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Strategy secretariat and the national and regional platforms — are increasingly being recognized and supported as key vehicles for Governments and civil society alike. The new system developed by the Strategy secretariat for monitoring progress on the implementation of the Hyogo Framework is functioning well and, together with the *Global Assessment Report* process, has delivered critical information to steer policy and action on disaster risk reduction. The midterm review during 2009 and 2010 will provide an important opportunity to address

strategic and fundamental matters concerning the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action towards 2015 and beyond.

44. The following recommendations are proposed.

Accelerate the systematic implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action at the national and local levels

45. **In line with the need to accelerate the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action, I encourage Member States to strengthen their participation in the Strategy system, including national and regional platforms, thematic technical platforms, the midterm review process and the third session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, to be held in 2011.**

46. **In this vein, I strongly urge Member States to further develop and strengthen their implementation mechanisms, particularly national coordination mechanisms for disaster risk reduction, national and local risk assessments, targets for achievement, monitoring and review processes and community-level support.**

Ensure climate change adaptation through disaster risk reduction

47. **I welcome the growing calls to use disaster risk reduction strategies to advance adaptation to climate change, and strongly support the inclusion of such strategies in climate change policies. I encourage Member States to link disaster risk reduction and adaptation policies in national plans and strategies in every sector, especially in land-use and settlement planning, critical infrastructure development, the management of natural resources, health and education.**

Invest today for a safer tomorrow

48. **I call on Member States to dedicate substantially more funds from national budgets to reduce disaster risks, and to take the action necessary to halve the loss of life from disasters by 2015, when the term of the Hyogo Framework concludes. I recommend that Member States give consideration to investment benchmarks, such as the concept of allocating for disaster risk reduction measures 10 per cent of humanitarian relief and reconstruction funds, 1 per cent of national development funding and 30 per cent of national climate change adaptation funds.**

Support the safe schools and hospitals initiative

49. **I strongly encourage Member States to join the global initiative to secure the safety of schools and hospitals, in particular by investing in actions to undertake national assessments of the safety of existing education and health facilities by 2011 and to develop and implement concrete action plans for safer schools and hospitals by 2015.**

50. **I invite Member States to commemorate actively the International Day for Disaster Reduction and recommend that 13 October should be dedicated as the fixed date for this topic, starting in 2010.**

Strengthen the funding arrangements for the Strategy

51. **In the light of the increasing need to strengthen international cooperation efforts in support of the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action and, consequently, of the Strategy secretariat's support activities, I call on Member States and Strategy stakeholders to augment their financial contributions to the United Nations Trust Fund for Disaster Reduction to ensure adequate support for the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action.**

Annex

Additional information on progress made in implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action*

A. Action at the national level

Priority 1
Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation

1. According to information contained in the *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction*, progress has been significant under priority 1 of the five priorities for action set out in the Hyogo Framework for Action, particularly in the development of policy and legislation and in strengthening multisector institutional systems and platforms for disaster risk reduction.

2. Bahrain has instituted a National Committee on Disaster Management; Ecuador has included disaster risk management in its new Constitution and national development plan, creating a new Technical Secretariat for Risk Management. The National Technical Committee on Risk Prevention and Mitigation of the Dominican Republic, established in 2008, provides advice and coordination of risk reduction activities at the national level. In Vanuatu, the national action plan tasks the Ministry of Finance and Economic Management with allocating ministerial budgets for disaster risk reduction to various ministries and departments. Colombia and the Islamic Republic of Iran have included disaster risk reduction in their national budgets. The Jamaican National Disaster Committee is chaired by the Prime Minister, and the national disaster plan sets out a comprehensive framework for participation for several Government agencies, the private sector and non-governmental organizations. The United States of America set out hazard-specific implementation plans in the context of its Grand Challenges for Disaster Reduction Strategy for prioritizing and guiding future actions and spending. Lesotho and Namibia have finalized their national policies and have submitted them to Parliament for approval. In Sri Lanka, a National Disaster Management Coordinating Committee was established and a corporate plan for the Disaster Management Centre is under development.

3. Argentina, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Indonesia, Jamaica, Peru and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia established national platforms for disaster risk reduction during the reporting period. Only 50 countries have established such multi-stakeholder coordinating mechanisms. In the Cayman Islands, the Chamber of Commerce plays a role in preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery efforts in national disaster plans. Kenya established a secretariat for the coordination of the national platform and five multi-stakeholder committees, and Togo has strengthened the national platform as a coordination mechanism.

4. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, in collaboration with over 80 of its national societies, produced a Framework for Community Safety and Resilience, which provides the basis for national societies to

* Complementing section II of the present report.

design and implement multisectoral community-based programmes. At least 130 national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies reported that they implement community-based disaster risk reduction programmes, including educational and awareness-raising activities.

Priority 2
Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning

5. Consistent progress has been reported in this area, although all countries acknowledge the need for more focused efforts on this front. Countries are still challenged to compile comprehensive risk assessments in a way that can inform disaster risk reduction, link early warning with disaster preparedness and response planning and use national information to inform local action.

6. Australia and New Zealand have established a comprehensive, integrated, multi-hazard approach to risk assessment. Switzerland aims to produce hazard maps and assessments covering the entire country by 2011 and ensure that they are applied by municipalities in land-use planning and building regulation processes. The Philippines has advanced its community-level risk assessment through hazard mapping. The development of a seismic monitoring network in Tajikistan is illustrative of the progress being made in many countries to improve hazard monitoring.

7. Seven countries[a] in South-Eastern Europe are systematically developing capacities on (a) disaster risk reduction strategies, policies, legislation and institutional capacities; (b) the capacity development of national meteorological and hydrological services to support disaster risk management; and (c) the development of financial risk transfer mechanisms supported by a partnership of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank. This model is being extended to seven countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus. Multi-hazard early warning system initiatives are under way in Costa Rica, El Salvador and Nicaragua, supported by a partnership of international agencies, while in China, a multi-hazard early warning system for the megacity Shanghai has been developed through collaboration between international, national and city organizations.

8. In Costa Rica, research agencies, together with the National Emergency Commission, are undertaking disaster risk assessments. In Jamaica, hazard data are used in the development of a methodology to rank vulnerable communities. The United States has developed a multi-hazard loss estimation programme, "Hazards U.S. Multi-Hazard (HAZUS-MH)". A hazard vulnerability assessment and a national assessment of living conditions commissioned by the Government of Cayman Islands are providing valuable data on storm surges and sea level rise factors and on vulnerability for the lower-income population.

9. Several countries in Africa have undertaken disaster risk assessments for specific sectors and hazards. In Mozambique, the national disaster management institution established a National Disaster Loss Observatory and a National Risk Information System, with the support of the Global Risk Identification Programme.

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[a] Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, the Republic of Moldova, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Work is also under way to compile a national risk atlas and to develop a simplified tool for assessing earthquake risk in Maputo.

10. Progress has been made in the use of technology and local capacities to develop effective early warning systems for frequent hazards such as cyclones and floods in Bangladesh, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Sri Lanka. Many countries and subregions have improved cooperation with neighbouring countries to reduce transboundary risks, including flooding in shared watersheds, tsunami early warning systems, locust infestations and health-related risks.

11. A collaborative programme will address the "last mile" early warning gaps existing in Sri Lanka. A national coordination mechanism has been established in relation to tsunami early warning in Madagascar. The capacities of the Mauritius Meteorological Services to observe, detect, forecast and issue early warnings for a wide variety of natural hazards have been developed.

12. The United Republic of Tanzania is building the capacities of coastal communities in tsunami and flood early warning and preparedness activities. in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the Municipal Government of La Paz is implementing a flood and landslide early warning system, including a hydraulic-hydrological real-time monitoring system.

Priority 3
Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels

13. Average global progress is weak across most areas relating to priority 3, particularly in the development and application of research methods and tools for multirisk assessments, the inclusion of disaster risk reduction concepts and practices in school curricula and education material and the development of nationwide public awareness strategies to stimulate a culture of disaster resilience. Many countries report the need to do more and better in these areas.

14. In the education sector, France, the United States and Uzbekistan, among other countries, are pioneering legal action to make disaster risk reduction mandatory as part of their nationwide education agendas and curricula. In Angola and Burundi, the Ministries of Education promoted the integration of disaster risk reduction into education. In Burkina Faso, environmental education was included at the primary school level and disaster risk reduction is was partly integrated into higher education. Tajikistan and Madagascar developed school material on disaster risk reduction, and Mozambique initiated training for primary schoolteachers and children on how to live with disasters. Innovative materials have been produced, including handbills in Ghana and a community vulnerability self-assessment kit in Indonesia.

15. In Costa Rica, environmental education programmes include disaster risk reduction, while the National Commission of University Deans promotes disaster risk reduction through community outreach programmes, research and teaching. In Ecuador, an educational reform effort is under way and risk management has been proposed as part of the mandatory curricula at various levels of education.

16. A capacity development project, "Periperi U", is being implemented as a partnership between 10 African universities, led by the University of Cape Town, South Africa. The United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human

Security has assisted the city of Brazzaville and the authorities of the Congo in establishing a Risk Management Institute.

17. Finally, numerous safe school initiatives have been implemented worldwide, including, in India, a project to ensure school seismic safety in mountainous areas; in Colombia, municipal action in Bogotá to reduce the structural vulnerability of Government schools; in Nepal, a training programme for students and masons to be "ambassadors" of school seismic safety; and in Japan, efforts to promote the retrofitting of all schools built before 1981. Teachers in rural Ecuador are receiving a school safety course on relevant hazards to which each locality is exposed.

Priority 4
Reduce the underlying risk factors

18. Progress on the underlying risk factors remains a challenge in most countries. Many countries have difficulty addressing underlying risk drivers such as poor urban and local governance, vulnerable rural livelihoods and ecosystem decline in a way that leads to reduced risk of damages and economic loss. At the same time, the governance arrangements for disaster risk reduction in many countries do not facilitate the integration of risk considerations into development. In general, the institutional and legislative arrangements for disaster risk reduction are weakly connected to development sectors.

19. Some countries in the Americas and Asia have established environmental and climate change as national priorities and have developed relevant legislation, policy and institutional frameworks. In Costa Rica, the Ministry of Planning and Economic Policy has included disaster risk assessments in project proposal formats on national investments. Several African countries are implementing measures to protect key industries from disaster risk. These include contingency plans for the agriculture sector in Madagascar, the poultry industry in the United Republic of Tanzania and various institutions in Ghana. Mozambique is taking steps to protect transport and communications infrastructure and ensure the continuity of the energy supply during flooding. The tourism sector is in the early stages of factoring disaster risk reduction into its development plans, for example with regard to specific public health actions in Mauritius and Seychelles.

20. Several countries, including Fiji, Oman and the Philippines, have initiated programmes in response to the World Disaster Reduction Campaign "Hospitals safe from disasters". Fiji has undertaken an audit of the main hospitals and health facilities to assess their structural resilience and service continuation during emergencies. The Hospital Safety Index, which provides a tool for a rapid assessment of the structural, non-structural and functional safety of health facilities, has continued to be implemented in Latin America and the Caribbean, and countries in other regions have also adapted and applied it.

Priority 5
Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels

21. Noteworthy progress is being made to develop preparedness for response, often closely linked with early warning activities as described above. All countries, in particular those in Asia and the Americas, report overall progress in strengthening their capacities to manage disaster risks. While many African countries have a contingency plan in place, Cape Verde, Madagascar, Mauritius and Mozambique are

good examples in that their plans encompass all administrative levels. Ghana has established a website to link regions by VHF radio. Kenya has put in place a National Disaster Operation Centre. In Togo, the United Nations cluster approach is being used to facilitate participation under sectoral leadership.

22. Insurance and new mechanisms, such as catastrophe pools and bonds, are being increasingly adopted in middle-income countries in order to replace traditional relief and reconstruction funding from Government and international sources. Mexico has issued a catastrophe bond to provide a funding mechanism for response and recovery in the case of a major earthquake, while the Caribbean countries and Turkey have developed catastrophe pool mechanisms. The Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility has already made payments to Saint Lucia and Dominica as a result of the November 2007 earthquake and to Turks and Caicos after Hurricane Ike in 2008. A similar mechanism is being put in place in South-eastern Europe. Several countries, including India, Malawi, Mexico, Nicaragua and Peru, have implemented weather derivative insurance schemes to protect agriculture from weather-related hazards.

B. Action at the regional level

23. *The Global Assessment Report* indicates that Europe, which is represented mostly by high-income countries and includes some upper-middle-income countries, reports higher progress than all other regions and across all priorities. Africa, with a majority of low-income countries, has made progress similar to other developing regions, except in priority areas 2 and 3. The Pacific region, owing to the presence of high-income countries such as Australia and New Zealand, has made more progress in priority areas 1, 3 and 4 than all other regions except Europe. The Americas have made more progress than Asia, except in priority areas 2 and 4.

24. **Africa**: Strengthened coordination and collaboration with the African Union Commission and the regional economic communities, and increasing consultations with other regional organizations, have accelerated the implementation of the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Programme of Action.

25. The Economic Community of West African States approved, and began implementing, a disaster risk reduction policy and strategy in cooperation with the Strategy secretariat and the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery, a partnership between the World Bank and the Strategy. The Economic Community of Central African States, with support from the European Union, has likewise moved to strengthen capacities in the region.

26. A regional capacity development project for severe weather forecasting and flash flood guidance in the Southern Africa Development Community is being developed by WMO and South Africa. The aim is to link technical capabilities to decision-making processes, and the project is being complemented with end-to-end multi-hazard early warning systems, initially in Mozambique, Namibia and South Africa.

27. Several partners, including the African Union, the UNDP Drought Monitoring Centre, the Economic Commission for Africa, the World Bank and the Strategy secretariat are cooperating to strengthen a regional network on drought risk reduction and to ensure that drought risk reduction strategies and tools are

incorporated into national adaptation and development processes. The third African Drought Adaptation Forum was convened in September 2008. National workshops led to the finalization of the analysis of drought risk reduction policies and plans in Kenya and Uganda. Analysis in Djibouti, Eritrea and Somalia is under way.

28. **West Asia and North Africa**: Regional organizations have focused on consolidating and securing political commitments and the engagement of policymakers in disaster risk reduction. The League of Arab States has taken a lead in promoting disaster risk reduction in regional policies on climate change, environment and disaster management. It undertook the first regional assessment on progress in disaster risk reduction and convened a regional workshop in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, in May 2009, hosted by the Presidency of Meteorology and Environment, to discuss the report and joint future actions.

29. The Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment, at its twentieth session, in December 2008, reaffirmed its commitment to reduce disaster risk and establish national platforms for risk reduction. The extraordinary ministerial session in May 2009 called for the development of an Arab strategy for disaster risk reduction and the establishment of a regional platform for disaster risk reduction by the first quarter of 2010.

30. Technical capacity development and knowledge-management efforts included the development of a regional database on hazards and risks and the launching of the Regional Centre for Disaster Risk Reduction, Training and Research, both hosted by the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport, and the translation of disaster risk reduction terminology into Arabic.

31. A regional training workshop on Hyogo Framework implementation and reporting was organized for national authorities and other regional partners with the secretariat of the Economic Cooperation Organization. As a result, disaster risk reduction featured prominently at various subsequent events in Central Asia and the Economic Cooperation Organization region, reflecting the increasing political commitment of the authorities.

32. A Strategy partnership with civil society organizations, aimed at enhancing community-based disaster risk reduction and piloting key initiatives in building community resilience, was launched with the Arab Network for Environment and Development, which has non-governmental organization members in 18 countries.

33. **Europe**: Regional activities have focused on maximizing the knowledge available in the region and stimulating collaboration among partners, for example through the use of regional meetings to exchange experience and build stronger partnerships with United Nations agencies and the Strategy system partners, particularly the World Bank. These included two European national platform and Hyogo Framework focal point meetings, an international workshop on the theme "For a new governance of natural risks", several meetings of thematic working groups, and the partnership of the Strategy and the Council of Europe within the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement, which supports the implementation of the Hyogo Framework in the European/Mediterranean region.

34. The regional ministerial conference on disaster risk management held in Sofia agreed to develop a two-year workplan on disaster risk management and to establish the South-eastern Europe Disaster Risk Mitigation and Adaptation Programme to reduce the vulnerability to hydrometeorological and other hazards in the region. It

was also agreed to request prime ministers in the region to contribute funds for the development of a Central Europe disaster risk catastrophe insurance mechanism. As part of this initiative, WMO and UNDP are working together to enhance the capacity of countries to collect and analyse hydrometeorological data and to reduce vulnerability to natural hazards, in alignment with the standards and policies of the European Union.

35. **Asia and the Pacific**: The third Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction was held in Kuala Lumpur in December 2008 and attracted a wide range of high-level stakeholders. The conference launched the Kuala Lumpur initiative on public-private partnerships for disaster risk reduction, which promotes corporate social responsibility and supportive fiscal policies as well as facilitating the development of a catastrophic risk insurance market.

36. Pacific island countries created the Pacific Platform for Disaster Risk Management to improve regional cooperation and communication, for example through the hosting of the meetings of regional groups, including disaster managers and the Pacific Disaster Risk Management Partnership Network.

37. The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction Asia Partnership continues to foster regional networking, coordination, collaboration and resource mobilization in the area of disaster risk reduction. At the second meeting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Task Force on Emergency Preparedness, held in August 2008, the APEC economies endorsed the Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction and Emergency Preparedness and Response in the Asia Pacific Region 2009-2015 — an initiative of Peru. The strategy is an important step forward in focusing attention on disaster risk reduction and emergency preparedness in the APEC region.

38. The Committee on Disaster Management of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) formally endorsed its participation in the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction Asia Partnership, and considers the Hyogo Framework as a guiding principle for its work. The Strategy also supported the development of a paper by the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism thematic working group on environment and disaster management entitled "Climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction in ASEAN: challenges and opportunities for partnership with the UN".

39. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and the Strategy secretariat have reached agreement on a memorandum of understanding to formalize cooperation on disaster risk reduction, and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Asian Disaster Reduction Centre and the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre have initiated a joint work planning process. These moves are enhancing capacities for implementing the Hyogo Framework.

40. **The Americas**: An important achievement in the region was the establishment of a regional platform under the leadership of the Organization of American States. The platform is supported by the Canadian International Development Agency and the World Bank, and was launched in Panama in March 2009.

41. The mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction within broader development agendas is supported by regional organizations — the Coordinating Centre for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America, the Andean Committee for Disaster Prevention and Relief, the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response

Agency and the Association of Caribbean States. Political commitment to the Hyogo Framework for Action has increased through several regional and subregional agreements and plans of action, such as the Strategic Framework for Education and Disaster Risk Reduction, adopted in Panama in May 2009 by ministers and education authorities of Central America and the Dominican Republic.

42. The General Secretariat of the Organization of American States is developing a regional platform on flood early warning systems which will connect national emergency systems with local governments and local communities and establish a regional cadre of experts and network of community champions and leaders. The Caribbean tsunami warning system is expected to be operational by 2010, with a network of seismographs being established for the Caribbean region, as part of a global project by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

43. Regional collaboration between WMO and partners has resulted in the implementation of technical capacity development projects such as the Central America Flash Flood Guidance System and end-to-end multi-hazard early warning systems in three countries in Central America.

C. Action at the international level

Priority 1
Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation

44. The United Nations Development Group Task Team on mainstreaming disaster risk reduction, supported by the Strategy secretariat and co-chaired by UNDP and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), finalized and disseminated guidelines for United Nations country teams on integrating disaster risk reduction into the common country assessment/United Nations Development Assistance Framework process. UNDP led a validation exercise among selected United Nations country teams to test the use of the guidance note and collect feedback. For 2009 and onward, the United Nations System Staff College will include disaster risk reduction as part of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework training modules.

45. United Nations resident coordinators have an important role in promoting disaster risk reduction policies, and this responsibility is now reflected in their standard job descriptions. Disaster risk reduction was included in the recent training workshops for resident coordinators held in Latin America and the Caribbean and in Africa. As a result, many resident coordinators are playing a more proactive role in disaster risk reduction.

46. The Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery has supported the mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction through its country assistance strategies and the formulation of country development strategies, such as poverty reduction strategy papers. However, translating plans into practice remains a challenge. A review of the 67 full and interim poverty reduction strategy papers showed that only 19 per cent devoted a whole chapter or section to disaster risk, 75 per cent mentioned the relationship between disaster risk and poverty and 25 per cent did not mention risk at all. Additional activities include catalysing global support for

building resilience into recovery and reconstruction after major disasters and launching a South-South cooperation programme to foster developing countries' leadership and exchange of knowledge and experience.

47. Tools and guidance for local governments have been developed in partnerships among United Cities and Local Governments, ProVention Consortium, the Earthquake and Megacities Initiatives, CITYNET, Local Governments for Sustainability and thematic platforms in the Americas and Asia. Elements for a "local Hyogo Framework for Action" have also been discussed in the regions. A meeting in Incheon Metropolitan City, Republic of Korea, will bring relevant partners together in August 2009 to contribute to the development of the global campaign on urban risk and safer cities 2010-2011.

48. An initiative to promote political will and accountability and to encourage investment in disaster risk reduction as a tool for climate change adaptation has quickly grown to engage 116 parliamentarians from 66 countries and several parliamentarians' networks around the world. This has led to advocacy initiatives by parliamentarians, steps toward new legislation and action plans in several countries, and the "Manila Call for Action of Parliamentarians on Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation", adopted at a consultative meeting of parliamentarians in October 2008.

Priority 2
Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning

49. New guidance and good practice information on early warning systems is being developed through a multiagency collaboration coordinated by WMO. This includes documentation of four examples — (a) the cyclone preparedness programme of Bangladesh; (b) the tropical cyclone early warning system of Cuba; (c) the vigilance system of France; and (d) the multi-hazard emergency preparedness programme of Shanghai, China — and a guideline entitled "Capacity development in multi-hazard early warning systems with focus on institutional collaboration and coordination".

50. The development of the risk update for the *Global Assessment Report* built on existing data sets developed by the World Bank Hotspot project, the UNDP Global Risk Identification Programme, UNEP and others, and also generated new data sets on risk, which shed a new light on global hazard and global risk distribution. The project partners — UNDP, the World Bank, UNEP/Global Resource Information Database (GRID)-Europe, the Norwegian Geotechnical Institute, Columbia University and the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction — developed refined methodologies for hazard modelling for five types of hazards, namely, cyclones, floods, earthquakes, landslides and tsunamis.

51. A revised "Terminology on Disaster Risk Reduction" was developed by the Strategy secretariat in consultation with Strategy partners and the Strategy Scientific and Technical Committee. It is now available in all official languages of the United Nations.

52. A comprehensive risk assessment service package, which includes guidelines on the implementation of national risk assessment, urban risk assessment and national disaster observatory, was developed by the UNDP-based Global Risk Identification Programme. The programme also supported national risk assessments

in four countries, urban risk assessments in more than 30 cities and national disaster observatories in more than 30 countries.

53. Tsunami early warning systems continue to advance, including complementary activities in tsunami hazard risk assessment, emergency preparedness and response as part of comprehensive tsunami mitigation programmes. Intergovernmental coordination groups for tsunami early warning systems have now been established for the Pacific Ocean, the Indian Ocean, the north-eastern Atlantic, Mediterranean and connected seas and the Caribbean and adjacent regions, through the coordination of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission. An international task team on disaster management and preparedness has been set up for the exchange of experiences and information on preparedness actions, education, awareness-raising campaigns and other matters.

54. In April 2008, the Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System welcomed the offers by India, Australia and Indonesia to act as regional tsunami watch providers to replace, by 2011, the interim service provided by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre in Hawaii and the Japan Meteorological Agency. Additional progress includes enhanced regional arrangements for improved data-sharing policies, transmission of real-time data, and communication by national authorities downstream to endangered communities.

55. The United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER), implemented by the Office for Outer Space Affairs, has provided technical advisory support to Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Ghana and Namibia. In addition, a web-based portal has been set up to provide information and guidance on space-based information for disaster risk reduction and to help support networking by communities of practice, including the "SPIDER Global Thematic Partnership". Many agencies cooperate in the framework of the Global Earth Observation System of Systems to improve the use of satellite observing systems for monitoring natural hazards and mitigating their impacts.

56. The United Nations University is developing a vulnerability assessment methodology for different hazards, focusing on floods and coastal hazards, for application in exposed locations in five countries.

Priority 3
Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels

57. The Thematic Cluster/Platform on Knowledge and Education for Disaster Risk Reduction organized a policy dialogue on disaster risk reduction as an essential contributor to inclusive education at the UNESCO International Conference on Education, held in Geneva. UNESCO and the Strategy promoted the role of disaster risk reduction in sustainable development at the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, held in Bonn, Germany.

58. The Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction highlighted the urgent need to implement disaster risk reduction education and school safety at all levels. The material and guidelines provided by the "Golden Library" for disaster risk reduction education have provided guidance in this area. The role and involvement of children as agents for change was highlighted through the child-centred disaster risk

reduction strategies of the United Nations Children's Fund. A number of Strategy system partners are addressing the needs of people with disabilities in disasters.

59. The Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative, a joint programme of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Strategy and UNDP, provided capacity development, advisory and support services to the Governments of Mozambique and Uganda, and supported the design of a capacity development project for South-Eastern Europe. Several participatory training materials were prepared, and training for United Nations staff, including resident and humanitarian coordinators, was carried out.

Priority 4
Reduce the underlying risk factors

60. The 2008-2009 World Disaster Reduction Campaign has focused on ensuring that hospitals are safe from disasters. The World Health Organization, the World Bank and the Strategy, together with their partners, have promoted the campaign in all regions, through activities to increase awareness of the importance of structural and non-structural safety and the functionality of health facilities. The World Bank is preparing a guidance note on integrating disaster risk reduction concerns into the Bank's projects on new infrastructure investments, including building safety standards.

61. Substantial scaling up of activity by leading environmental organizations has been taking place. The International Union for Conservation of Nature has prepared guidance and training materials on ecosystem management for disaster risk reduction. The World Wide Fund for Nature disseminated a report entitled "Natural security" outlining the role of protected areas in reducing disaster risks. The guidance note by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development on strategic environmental assessment and disaster risk reduction was endorsed by members of the Development Assistance Committee Network on Environment and Development Cooperation in October 2008. UNEP provided training in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation to coastal zone managers through the Mangroves for the Future initiative.

62. The Strategy secretariat continued to promote disaster risk reduction as an adaptation policy and to build close working relationships on the topic with the parties and the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. During the period, cooperation was enhanced with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on humanitarian aspects of climate change. The Strategy secretariat also provided information and submissions to Convention processes, including the Nairobi work programme.

63. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change decided in April 2009 to produce a special report on managing the risk of extreme events to advance climate change adaptation, following a proposal by Norway and the Strategy secretariat. The special report will provide an authoritative basis of factual information on climate-related disaster risk and methodologies for reducing and managing risks.

64. The World Bank developed the Catastrophe Deferred Draw Down Option to respond to a request by middle-income countries for a financial instrument that would address the immediate funding needs in the aftermath of a disaster caused by a natural hazard. This will allow ministries of finance to take a proactive role in

disaster risk management by providing a source of immediate liquidity in the aftermath of disasters.

65. At the 2009 session of the Global Platform, Colombia promoted the concept that a minimum of 30 per cent of national adaptation funds could be allocated for national-level disaster risk reduction measures. This is based on the past experience of Colombia in reducing adaptation costs by investing for disaster risk reduction.

Priority 5
Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels

66. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee sub-working group on preparedness and contingency planning contributed to risk analysis for better preparedness through the quarterly "Early Warning — Early Action" report, which is aimed at fostering enhanced preparedness and early humanitarian response, with particular attention to potential new crises and to changes in existing emergencies.

67. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee Informal Task Force on Climate Change initiated an inter-agency consultation process on the humanitarian implications of climate change in order to assess the potential impacts of climate change on humanitarian activities, and the role of humanitarian actors in disaster risk reduction was discussed in the context of a number of regional and national consultations. Findings have reconfirmed the need to strengthen the Hyogo Framework for Action as the common framework under which all communities of practice can work together in an integrated manner.

68. A guidance and indicator package for strengthening disaster preparedness efforts has been developed by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. A number of international organizations are mainstreaming the Guidelines for the Domestic Facilitation and Regulation of International Disaster Relief and Initial Recovery Assistance into legal development initiatives. At least 110 national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies have an active preparedness role in their national emergency plans.